

Remarks

These remarks are in response to the Office Action dated June 8, 2009 (the “Office Action”). This response is being timely filed. Although no fees are believed due, authorization is given to charge any deficiency or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 50-0951.

At the time of the Office Action, claims 1-13 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §112. Claims 1, 7, 10 and 12 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103. Claims 3-6, 8 and 9 were objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but were indicated as allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. All of the rejections and responses thereto are set out fully below.

I. Objections to the claims

Objections were raised to claims 1-13 because of minor informalities. Appropriate corrections to the preamble of claim 1 have been made herein and withdrawal of the objection is respectfully requested.

II. Rejection Under 35 U.S.C. §112

The Office Action rejected claim 4 under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as invention. The Office Action states that there is insufficient antecedent basis for the limitation “the insulating cladding.” Accordingly, claim 4 has been amended herein to recite “an insulating cladding.” Additionally, Applicants have further amended many of the claims to remove antecedent basis issues. Applicants believe that the amendments presented herein overcome the rejection. Thus, withdrawal of the rejection is respectfully requested.

III. Rejection Under 35 U.S.C. §103

Claims 1, 7, 10 and 12 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent Publication No. 2003/0144656 to Ocel et al. (“Ocel”), in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,944,715 to Goble et al. (“Goble”). Claim 2 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Ocel, in view of Goble, and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,634,921 to Hood et al. Claim 11 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Ocel, in view of Goble, and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,402,750 {WP612349;1}

to Atkinson et al. Lastly, claim 13 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Ocel, in view of Goble, and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,053,172 to Hovda et al.

Nevertheless, claims 3-6, 8 and 9 were objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but were indicated as allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. Although Applicants respectfully disagrees with the rejections, Applicants has decided to amend the claims to combinations that were previously indicated as allowable in order to move the application onto immediate allowance.

Accordingly, Applicants have amended claim 1 to include all of the features of claim 3. Claim 7 has been amended to include the features of previous claim 1 and claim 8. Claim 9 has been amended to include the features of previous claim 1.

In addition to minor amendments throughout the claims to address antecedent basis issues, the previous language of claim 1, which is now present in claims 1, 7 and 9, has been slightly amended to delete the word "rigid" with respect to shaft tube (20).

Previous claim 3 (the text of which has been incorporated in claim 1) has been amended to depend from now independent claim 7. Previous claim 8 (the text of which has been incorporated in claim 7), has been amended to depend from independent claim 1. Likewise, the features of previous claim 9 have been presented as new claims 14 and 15, which respectively depend from independent claims 1 and 7. Lastly, the features of previous claim 3 have been presented as new claim 16, which depends from claim 9. No new matter has been introduced and no additional claim fees are necessary since the application includes only three independent claims and less than 20 total claims.

Applicant respectfully asserts that the references fail to disclose, suggest or render obvious the arrangement of structures recited in amended independent claims 1, 7 and 9. Thus, withdrawal of all rejections is respectfully requested.

IV. Conclusion

For at least the reasons set forth above all currently pending independent claims are believed to be allowable. Furthermore, all dependent claims are believed to be allowable due to their dependent upon an allowable base claim and or further features recited therein.

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Issuance of a notice of allowance is respectfully requested. Nevertheless, Applicant invites the Examiner to call the undersigned if it is believed that a telephonic interview would expedite the prosecution of the application to an allowance.

Respectfully submitted,

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